

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-43. (Canceled)

44. (Previously Presented) A method of forming a lesion in a left atrium of a patient, comprising the steps of:

introducing a circumferential ablation device including an expandable member and a circumferential ablation element into the left atrium;

expanding the expandable member;

engaging a circumferential region of tissue at a location where a pulmonary vein extends from the left atrium with the circumferential ablation device; and

ablating the circumferential region of tissue with the circumferential ablation element.

45. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the step of introducing a circumferential ablation device comprises introducing a circumferential ablation device including a collapsible/expandable hoop and a circumferential ablation element.

46. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the step of introducing a circumferential ablation device comprises introducing a circumferential ablation device including a collapsible/expandable hoop and a continuous conductive region on the hoop.

47. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the step of introducing a circumferential ablation device comprises introducing a circumferential ablation device including a collapsible/expandable hoop and a plurality of spaced conductive regions on the hoop.

48. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the step of engaging a circumferential region of tissue comprises encircling the pulmonary vein with the expandable member.

49. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the step of ablating the circumferential region of tissue comprises transmitting energy into the tissue.

50-51. (Canceled)

52. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the step of ablating the circumferential region of tissue results in the formation of a circumferential lesion having a lesion circumference and a lesion width that is less than two-thirds the lesion circumference.

53. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the circumferential region of tissue includes the pulmonary vein ostium.

54. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44 wherein
the step of introducing a circumferential ablation device comprises introducing a circumferential ablation device with the expandable member in a radially collapsed position, and

the step of engaging a circumferential region of tissue comprises advancing the expandable member when in a radially expanded position toward the pulmonary vein until the expandable member engages the pulmonary vein wall.

55. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, further comprising the step of:

allowing antegrade blood flow to perfuse from the pulmonary vein and into the left atrium while engaging the circumferential region of tissue and also while ablating the circumferential region of tissue with the circumferential ablation element.

56. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, further comprising the step of:

ablating an elongate region of tissue located along a left atrial wall of the left atrium with a linear lesion ablation element provided along a linear lesion ablation member.

57. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein the expandable member comprises an outer surface and the circumferential ablation element is located at least in part along the outer surface,

the step of engaging a circumferential region of tissue comprises engaging a circumferential region of tissue with the ablation element when the expandable member is expanded, and

the step of ablating the circumferential region of tissue with the circumferential ablation element comprises ablating the circumferential region of tissue while the circumferential ablation element is in contact with at least the portion of the circumferential region of tissue.

58-61. (Canceled)

62. (Previously Presented) A method for treating atrial arrhythmia in a patient, comprising:

positioning a tissue ablation device adjacent to a circumferential region of tissue associated with an orifice of a vein that carries blood from the body or lungs to an atrium; and

forming a circumferential conduction block in the circumferential region of tissue with the tissue ablation device.

63. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of positioning a tissue ablation device comprises positioning a tissue ablation device ~~having a shape corresponding to~~ that encircles the orifice.

64. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in ~~claim 63~~ claim 62, wherein the step of positioning a tissue ablation device comprises positioning a tissue ablation device adjacent to one of a superior vena cava, an inferior vena cava and a pulmonary vein.

65. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of positioning a tissue ablation device comprises collapsing the tissue ablation device, inserting the tissue ablation device into the heart, and expanding the tissue ablation device after the tissue ablation device is within the heart.

66. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of positioning a tissue ablation device comprises positioning a bendable loop structure that supports at least one tissue ablation element.

67. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of positioning a tissue ablation device comprises positioning an annular structure that supports at least one tissue ablation element.

68. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of positioning a tissue ablation device comprises positioning the tissue ablation device such that it encircles the orifice.

69. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of forming a conduction block comprises forming a continuous conduction block.

70. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of forming a conduction block comprises applying ablating energy to the tissue.

71. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 62, wherein the step of forming a conduction block comprises applying electromagnetic ablating energy to the tissue.